

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 ACDA-10
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R 171626Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 984
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN
USIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 8636

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE, XF
SUBJECT: DECEMBER 17 SYRIAN MEDIA STESS ASAD VISIT TO CAIRO
AND HUSS VISIT TO DAMASCUS

1. AFTERNOON DECEMBER 17 DAMASCUS RADIO ANNOUNCED ARRIVAL
OF PRIMIN HUSS IN SYRIAN CAPITAL AT 1300 LOCAL. PRESS
NOTED THAT HUSS WOULD BE VISITING SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT
NEXT FEW DAYS AND WOULD RETURN TO LEBANON BY DEC. 21.
PRESS REFERRED TO STATEMENT BY SAUDI REP TO QUADRIPARTITE
TALKS IN BEIRUT INDICATING THAT THIRD MEETING OF COMMITTEE
WITH PRES. SARKIS WOULD TAKE PLACE DEC. 22. ASKED WHETHER
HEAVY ARMS COLLECTION PROBLEM HAD BEEN SOLVED, SAUDI REPLIED
THERE WAS NO PROBLEM.
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2. ON REGIONAL FRONT, MEDIA CONCENTRATED ON ASAD VISIT
TO CAIRO BEGINNING DEC. 18. PRESS BANNERED: "EGYPTIAN AND
ARAB WELCOME FOR PRES. ASAD'S TRIP TO CAIRO. ASAD AND
SADAT TALKS WILL LEAVE THEIR TRACES ON ARAB SOLIDARITY AND
PEACE ENDEAVORS IN REGION." LEBANESE AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO

TOLD SANA THAT TALKS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT, "PARTICULARLY AS WE ARE IN PROCESS OF DISCUSSING PALESTINIAN CAUSE AND RELATED TOPICS." ARTICLE CITED POLITICAL CIRCLES IN CAIRO THAT ASAD AND PRES. SADAT WILL DRAW UP FUTURE ARAB STRATEGY, FIRM UP BILATERAL RELATIONS, REVIVE JOINT COMMITTEES AT ALL LEVELS WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF CAR, AND DISCUSS LEBANESE SITUATION.

3. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL FOCUSED ON NECESSITY OF CAIRO TALKS TO COORDINATE ARAB POLITICAL AND MILITARY STRATEGY, "SINCE THERE WOULD BE NO WAR WITHOUT COOPERATION BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT, NOR WOULD THERE BE AN ACCEPTABLE PEACE."

4. AL-BAATH COLUMNIST SUGGESTED THAT OPTIMISM ABOUT IMMINENT SETTLEMENT BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAEL IS WITHOUT REASON. REITERATING THAT "ARABS SUPPORT ANY INTERNATIONAL EFFORT AIMED AT SEEKING JUST AND LASTING SETTLEMENT IN REGION, PROVIDED IT BASED UPON TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM ARAB TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967 AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS", HE STRESSED THAT OPTIMISM ABOUT IMMINENCE OF SETTLEMENT UNREASONABLE BECAUSE OF (A) ISRAELI REFUSAL TO WITHDRAW FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, (B) RECENT ISRAELI REAFFIRMATION THAT JERUSALEM WILL REMAIN ITS CAPITAL, (C) ISRAELI PERSISTENCE IN ESTABLISHING SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, (D) ISRAELI NON-RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, (E) REJECTION OF PRESENCE OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES AT "ANY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AIMED AT ESTABLISHING JUST AND LASTING PEACE," AND (F) ACQUISITION OF MODERN WEAPONS, INCLUDING F-15'S. COLUMNIST ADDED THAT ISRAEL TRYING TO PLACE OBSTACLES IN WAY OF CONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE;
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HE STATED THAT ARABS WANT COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT, WHEREAS ISRAEL INSISTING ON REACHING SEPARATE AGREEMENTS WITH VARIOUS PARTIES IN ORDER TO EVADE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, A CONCEPT WHICH ARABS HAVE REJECTED. HE CONCLUDED THAT "ALL ARABS INSIST UPON RECOVERING PALESTINIAN RIGHTS BEFORE SINAI AND THE GOLAN."
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